

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Claims 1, 3, and 6-15 are pending in the present application. In light of the following remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all presently pending claims are in condition for allowance.

II. THE 35 U.S.C. § 112 REJECTION SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, for failing to comply with the written description requirement. Applicants respectfully submit that this issue was addressed with a specification amendment submitted with the response dated April 9, 2009. The Examiner fails to address this specification amendment and simply refers to “the original disclosure” of claim 11 in support of this rejection. (See 6/23/09 Office Action, p. 2). Therefore, Applicants maintain the same position with regard to the allowability of claim 11 and respectfully request the withdrawal of this rejection.

III. THE 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) REJECTIONS SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN

Claims 1, 4-9, and 12-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being obvious over Aregger (U.S. Patent No. 6,276,480), in view of Matsumoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,778,024), further in view of Vuagnat (U.S. Patent No. 4,881,755), and further in view of Yamaguchi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,440,834).

Claim 1 recites, “[a] vehicle for a handicapped person, comprising: at least one steerable front wheel; a frame; at least two wheel suspensions; at least two rear wheels, each of the at least two rear wheels being individually coupled to the frame with a corresponding one of the at least two wheel suspensions; *controllable steering drives, each controllable steering drive corresponding to and driving the corresponding one of the two rear wheels;* a fork holding the at least one front wheel; a steering rod connected to the fork and steering the at least one front wheel; and at least one rotational angle sensor situated on the steering rod, wherein *the rotational angle sensor provides a signal on the*

pivot angle of the front wheel, and wherein the signal is used for the activation of the controllable steering drives which control the two rear wheels.”

The Examine correctly acknowledges that the combination of Aregger, Matsumoto, and Vuagnat does not teach “the use of a rotational angle sensor situated on the steering rod.” (See 6/23/09 Office Action, p. 5). To cure this deficiency, the Examiner relies on Yamaguchi. However, Yamaguchi is directed at preventing a change in the yaw moment about the center of gravity of a vehicle. The system of Yamaguchi includes a steering wheel (5), which controls the direction of two front tires (1, 2), and an angle sensor (25), which detects the amount by which the steering wheel has been turned. (See Yamaguchi, col. 4, ll. 24-26, col. 5, ll. 15-18). The angle sensor then sends a signal indicative of the amount the steering wheel is turned to a controller (8). The controller then sends a signal to a steering actuator (16), which is “operatively coupled to the left and right rear wheels 3 and 4 to turn (steer) the left and right rear wheels 3 and 4 in response to operation of the steering wheel 5 during certain predetermined driving conditions.” (See Id., col. 4, ll. 45-48). In contrast, claim 1 explicitly states that “the rotational angle sensor provides a signal on **the pivot angle of the front wheel.**” Yamaguchi provides a signal indicative of the amount by which the steering wheel has been turned. As is well known in the art, the amount by which a steering wheel is turned is not the same as the amount by which a wheel is turned. For example, a steering wheel can be turned 360 degrees whereas a wheel cannot. Accordingly, Yamaguchi fails to disclose or suggest “the rotational angle sensor provides a signal on the pivot angle of the front wheel.”

Applicants respectfully submit that Aregger, Matsumoto, Vuagnat, and Yamaguchi, taken alone or in any combination, fail to disclose or suggest that “the rotational angle sensor provides a signal on the pivot angle of the front wheel,” as recited in claim 1 and that claim 1 is, therefore, allowable. Because claims 4-9 and 12-14 depend on and, therefore, contain all of the limitations of claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also allowable.

Claims 2-3, 10, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being obvious over Aregger in view of Matsumoto, further in view of Vuagnat, further in view of Yamaguchi, and further in view of Itoh (U.S. Published App. No. 2004/0238259).

Applicants respectfully submit that Itoh fails to cure the above mentioned deficiencies of Aregger, Matsumoto, Vuagnat, and Yamaguchi and that Aregger, Matsumoto, Vuagnat, Yamaguchi, and Itoh, taken alone or in any combination, fail to disclose or suggest that “the rotational angle sensor provides a signal on the pivot angle of the front wheel,” as recited in claim 1. Because claims 2-3, 10, and 15 depend on and, therefore, contain all of the limitations of claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also allowable.

CONCLUSION

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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